

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER 17, 2020
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Wescott called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. (In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and consistent with Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders and Senate Bill 2135 (that was signed into law and which became effective on June 12, 2020), the meeting was held via video conference and/or telephone conference). Following the call to order, roll call was taken.

The following Board Members participated:

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| Present: | Chairman Fred S. Wescott Vice Chairman Dina M. Getty Commissioner Mustafa Abdall Commissioner Alanna D. Conard Commissioner Danielle J.A. Potter Commissioner Tasha N. Reddic |
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| Absent: | Commissioner Ronald E. Ballard |
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Also participating: Deputy Director Deb Alfredson, Voucher Programs Director Kristin Andrews and James R. Pirages of the law firm of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.

Executive Director Alan Zais and Finance Director Vickie Huwe also participated via video conference and in-person at the Winnebago County Housing Authority offices at 3621 Delaware Street, Rockford, Illinois, so as to allow for public attendance (if any).

Inasmuch as the meeting was held via video/teleconference, the Pledge of Allegiance was not recited.

Introduction of Guests

None.

Changes to Agenda

Attorney Jim Pirages asked that the item under "New Business" be moved to this point of the Agenda to provide an explanation as to why the meeting was being held in this manner and to allow for the temporary suspension of a bylaw provision. The consensus of the Board was to allow for this change to the Agenda.

New Business

Attorney Jim Pirages explained the basis for the meeting being held in this manner and requested the temporary suspension of a bylaw provision for purposes of this meeting. Attorney Pirages advised the Commissioners that in keeping with Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 20-07 issued

in March of 2020 and continuing thereafter as well as the recently enacted Senate Bill 2135 (which became effective on June 12, 2020), various provisions of the Open Meetings Act (including those requiring the members of the public body to be physically present at each meeting and those limiting remote participation by members of the public body) have been suspended provided certain requirements are met (including the audio recording of the meeting). Attorney Pirages went on to note that the provisions of the WCHA's bylaws (specifically, Article IV, Section 4 which provide that "[t]he physical presence of four (4) Commissioners shall constitute a quorum for purposes of conducting its business...") could also be suspended in keeping with the provisions of the Executive Order. Thereafter, a motion to suspend that bylaw provision for purposes of the September 17, 2020 meeting was made by Commissioner Potter and that motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Getty. That motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote of the six (6) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Alan Zais noted that his written report had accompanied the Board packet the Commissioners had previously received.

Alan discussed the RAD 1 Submanagement Agreement applicable to the Hosmer/Brewster Development in Freeport. He noted that the Submanagement Agreement between the Winnebago County Housing Authority (WCHA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Freeport (HACF) ended at the end of March 2020. He went on to say that despite multiple attempts to renew that Agreement, no new Submanagement Agreement had been agreed upon despite efforts by the WCHA to pursue same. As a result, Alan noted that the WCHA has given notice to the HACF of its intention to terminate that Submanagement Agreement as of the end of September 2020 and advised the Board of the plan is to convert the HACF employees working at Hosmer and Brewster to the WCHA payroll. Alan asked Attorney Pirages whether there was additional information that he would like to provide; Attorney Pirages noted that the HACF Executive Director had apparently made comments about challenging the WCHA's actions but, to the best of WCHA's knowledge, so far no challenges have been asserted.

Vice Chairman Getty said that it was unfortunate but that the WCHA really had no choice but to take the action that it has taken.

Executive Director Alan Zais then added that he had no other information upon which to comment from his report but asked the Commissioners if they had any questions. Vice Chairman Getty noted her questions regarding the status of Moving to Work (MTW); she said that she had been passionate in favor of the MTW initiative and asked how the WCHA currently fits within MTW. Alan reminded the Board that the WCHA had applied for Cohort 1 in which it wanted to participate. Unfortunately, the WCHA was not selected for Cohort 1 inasmuch as the size of an authority participating in Cohort 1 was "capped" at 1,000 units; Alan said that with WCHA's involvement at Hosmer/Brewster (in which it is participating at HUD's and the HACF's request) the WCHA had 44 units over that 1,000 unit maximum and so it did not qualify for Cohort 1. Alan stated that the WCHA was disappointed by this disqualification and asked for a review of that decision; unfortunately, after review by the legal department at HUD, no changes were made to the maximum number of units. He said that Cohort 2 participants have also been selected and that Cohort involves a rent reform study only. He said that Cohorts 3 and 4 are upcoming and noted

that one of them involves landlord participation and other specific initiatives. Alan added that he recently saw that Cohort 5 will be offered but is unaware at present as to the particulars for eligibility in Cohort 5. However, he said that he believes that Cohort 5 may provide for additional flexibility from HUD as to eligible housing authorities and is inclined to suggest to the Board that the WCHA hold off until Cohort 5 to resubmit its application. He noted, however, that he will be obtaining additional information on the specifics of Cohort 5 and will keep the Board advised of same.

Vice Chairman Getty said that it was disappointing the way it turned out with regard to Cohort 1 and Alan agreed, especially given the fact that the WCHA had been a strong advocate for MTW, so it is disappointing that the WCHA was not included.

Alan also discussed the resolutions that are a part of the Consent Agenda and addressed the reconfiguration services noted in Resolution 20R32. He said that the reconfiguration will allow for separate entrances and exits, easier sanitation of facilities, etc. and will be paid for by the use of CARES funds. While it was originally noted that the funds had to be expended by the end of December 2020, Alan said that he had recently learned from HUD that the deadline has been extended to December 31, 2021. Nevertheless, he said that the reconfiguration that is subject of Resolution 20R32 is still important and desperately needed.

He also discussed the noncompetitive nature of the bids leading to that Resolution. He said that efforts had been made to reach out to several vendors. He said the first vendor declined as they were currently unable to do commercial work. Another vendor declined because they were overscheduled (this information was confirmed by Deputy Director Deb Alfredson's input as well). As a result, Alan noted that it was his belief that a non-competitive procurement under these circumstances was consistent with the WCHA's procurement policy applicable to such matters.

With regard to the amount of Resolution 20R32, it is for an amount not to exceed \$80,000. He said that the recent quote is for \$59,000 but the WCHA and the contractor are presently attempting to fine tune the changes that are subject of that Resolution.

With regard to Resolution 20R33 applicable to roof repairs at the Robert Johnston Garden Apartments, Alan and Deb commented that there were erratic responses received to the Request for Proposals submitted in this matter. There were different opinions as to the scope of work needed and different dollar figures ranging anywhere from \$5,000 to \$85,000. The proposal from Moman Construction in the amount of \$28,350 appeared to be reasonable and to meet all of the necessary repairs needed. Alan said that they had also discussed the roof repairs at Robert Johnston Garden Apartments with the WCHA's insurer, AHRMA. While 20 contractors were asked to express an interest in this project, only four contractors looked at the project and only two submitted responses.

Attorney Pirages noted that with regard to the items on the Consent Agenda involving 20R32 and 20R33, the spelling of the contractor needed to be changed to correct it to "Moman" (in place of "Morman") Construction.

Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda (as amended) was made by Vice Chairman Getty. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Potter. The items on the Consent Agenda were approved by unanimous roll call vote of the six (6) Commissioners present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent.

Financial Report

Finance Director Vickie Huwe noted that the finances for August were contained in the Board packet. She noted that Attorneys Keeling and Lockwood at Hinshaw & Culbertson had been successful in securing tax exempt status for Collier Garden Apartments and in the future it will pay PILOT and save money on real estate taxes. In addition, she stated that Collier Gardens has received \$105,000 refund from the County for taxes applicable to the past three years.

Vickie advised the Board that she has a new helper assisting her in finance two days per week. She said that the new helper also assists at WCHA properties on other days when not helping out in finance (she was formerly the Assistant Property Manager at Collier Gardens) and has been in place assisting in finance for approximately one month doing accounts payable tasks, etc. Vickie said that the helper has thus far been of great assistance to her. Alan added that this individual assists not only as backup in finance but also as backup with properties in the event of absences, etc.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Vice Chairman Getty noted her participation in regular Zoom conferences as a result of her participation in various committees with NAHRO. She stated that there had been a recent advisory letter to Congressional members that had been promoted by NAHRO with regard to financial assistance during the current pandemic. While NAHRO had a goal of 8,500 support letters for this initiative, over 13,000 were received. Vice Chairman Getty encouraged the Commissioners to continue sending such letters and to check the NAHRO website and app for additional information on these initiatives. She also said that on the website there is a “news and publication” button that can be used to share what has been done by housing authorities during the pandemic. She said that NAHRO is asking executive directors to submit information through this website function to discuss pandemic-related steps that they have taken, with the goal of obtaining 25 submissions from executive directors.

Alan thanked the Commissioners for the letters that they had previously sent and noted that they are incredibly effective as to their impact on Congress. Vice Chairman Getty added that the submission of such letters is, in her opinion, an important part of Commissioners’ roles in their positions. She noted that the submission of those letters can be easily accomplished by using the NAHRO website.

Executive Session

None.

Action Taken from Executive Session

None.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Reddic and that motion was seconded by Commissioner Potter. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote of all six (6) Commissions present with none against and one (1) Commissioner absent. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alanna D. Conard, Recording Secretary